

VZCZCXRO0496
PP RUEHCHI RUEHNH RUEHPB
DE RUEHDT #0369/01 1981209
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 171209Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY DILI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2807
INFO RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0615
RUCNARF/ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM COLLECTIVE
RUEHXX/GENEVA IO MISSIONS COLLECTIVE
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0688
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RHHMUNA/USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC
RUEHDT/AMEMBASSY DILI 2134

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DILI 000369

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/MTS
PACOM FOR POLAD AND JOC
NSC FOR HOLLY MORROW
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [MARR](#) [TT](#)
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR SITREP FOR JULY 10-17, 2006

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¶1. Summary:

New government leaves opposition parties cold
Prosecutor General sworn in for second four-year term
Rai Los hands over his weapons
Parliament back to work on electoral law and Alkatiri case
Plans for additional demonstrations called off
Internally Displaced People (IDPs) beginning to return~slowly
End summary.

New government leaves opposition parties cold

¶2. Prime Minister Jose Ramos-Horta on July 14 announced the composition of the cabinet over which he will preside (see septel). Public response to the announcement has been generally muted, as most of the population in Dili seems more intent on getting back to their normal lives. However, there were several critical statements by opposition parties and civil society. Among the criticisms voiced were that the new government has not expanded the representation of opposition parties within the cabinet and that Ramos-Horta was "wearing Alkatiri's old shirt" by retaining much of the same cabinet.

¶3. The major opposition parties had the previous day demonstrated their objection to the approach of President Xanana Gusmao and Ramos-Horta in forming the new government by refusing to attend a meeting of opposition parties with Gusmao. Absent from that meeting were the heads of the Democratic Party (PD), the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT), and the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT). The opposition parties' primary complaint is that they have not been consulted as mandated by the Constitution in the formation of the new government.

Prosecutor General sworn in for second four-year term

¶4. President Gusmao today swore in Longinhos Monteiro for a second four-year term as Prosecutor General. Monteiro's first term ended several months ago and there has been ongoing

speculation that he would be replaced. Several candidates had been discussed, with Truth and Friendship Commission member Aniceto Guterres most often mentioned as having the support of both Gusmao and the ruling Fretilin party. However, Gusmao has also been urging Monteiro to move forward on the criminal cases against former Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato and former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri and has been reported to be using the threat of not reappointing him as pressure. The decision to go ahead and reappoint him possibly reflects Gusmao's satisfaction with the progress of these cases.

Rai Los hands over his weapons

¶5. In a widely covered and well-attended ceremony on July 11 "Rai Los" the head of the group in Liquica district that claims to have been armed by former Interior Minister Rogerio Lobato handed over his group's weapons as evidence to the Prosecutor General. Emboffs and other observers in attendance counted fewer weapons than previously seen in his possession. However, Railos explained to local media that several weapons had already been passed to one of the military dissidents who had given the weapons to Australian forces in a separate handover. Notably, however, Railos did not handover his pistol, which remained visible in his pocket.

¶6. Observers at the ceremony remarked on the varied and somewhat confusing cast of characters in attendance. In addition to Railos, who was inexplicably dressed in an F-FDTL uniform, and Ramos-Horta who arrived in the company of Bishop Nacimento and the head of a visiting European Commission delegation, also in attendance were several members of the National Police (PNTL) including the National Commissioner of Police and the head of the Police Reserve Unit (URP).

Parliament back to work on electoral law and Alkatiri case

¶7. The National Parliament appeared to be genuinely back to work this last week, with plenary sessions proceeding as normal.

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Parliament's recess, normally due to begin July 15, was delayed until August 15 and will be delayed again "if necessary." Early in the week, Parliament received a letter from former Prime Minister Alkatiri in which he stated his intent to cooperate with the judicial process based on allegations that he was involved in arms distribution. In addition he asked to "hold back" his position as a Member of Parliament until the case is completed.

¶8. The electoral law drafted by the Alkatiri government was resubmitted to Parliament last week by the Ramos-Horta government and has been admitted to the Parliamentary Committee for Constitutional Affairs for review.

Plans for additional demonstrations called off

¶9. Although continuing to voice their unhappiness with the dominance of Fretilin in the new government and with perceived lack of progress on the criminal case against former Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri, the National Front for Justice and Peace (FNJP) has informed Emboffs and announced publicly that it will not be organizing additional demonstrations in the near future. The FNJP, led by dissident F-FDTL major, Augusto Tara, was the primary force behind the anti-Alkatiri demonstrations that took place in Dili in June. Instead, they plan to focus their energies on campaigning for the swift prosecution of the Alkatiri criminal case.

Internally Displaced People (IDPs) beginning to return~slowly

¶10. Security throughout Dili has improved to the point where many IDPs have begun to make forays back to their homes. However, official numbers of IDPs have yet to go down significantly. One of the reasons for this is that large numbers of IDPs are retaining their camp registration even if they are spending the majority of their time back in their

neighborhoods. Several phenomenon appear to be at work here. Probably the most important is that there is still a widespread perception that security is tenuous and will require a greater police presence in the neighborhoods to overcome. Other factors at work include continued community tensions especially in the hardest hit neighborhoods; lack of housing for those whose homes were destroyed or damaged; and a desire or need to maintain access to the resources provided in the camps. The various organizations and agencies providing aid to the IDPs have formed a working group to address the long-term challenge of getting people back to their homes.

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